

THE ORGANIZER

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Workers at AT&T Poised to Strike **IWW/CWA dual-carders in the heart of the struggle**

At midnight April 5, 2009 contracts for most of the component groups represented by the Communications Workers of America (CWA) at the telecom giant AT&T have expired. After weeks of mobilizing, around 90,000 workers are poised to strike one of the largest and most profitable multinational corporations. A job action by CWA would be the largest and among the most significant labor action in the United States since the UPS strike in 1997. It would also be the first major strike under the Obama regime. The brewing confrontation could set the tone for class struggle in the U.S. for the near future.

AT&T has demanded major concessions in health care, seniority, over-time, and discipline. These demands are opportunistic, and the company has made specious comparisons with the collapse of the auto industry. More concerning, the company is attempting to put the different parts of "the new AT&T" against each other. CWA has only partially resisted these efforts.

The attitude among the rank and file is increasingly militant. As we continue to work without a contract, public displays of union solidarity occur regularly throughout all shifts. There is now a significant group of workers who are not only willing to strike, but actively want to strike.

If we are forced to go on strike it is important that we win. We have little confidence that the business union approach can beat such a committed and powerful adversary. It is likely that the withdrawal of our labor alone will not be sufficient. Direct action tactics like

those most recently employed by the Republic Windows workers in Chicago, who successfully blocked the sell-off of their factory by staging an occupation/sit-in are ones we need to look at and advocate.

Members of the IWW who are dual card members with the CWA are in the active core of union workers. The group emerged during a struggle for greater union democracy in our CWA local about 4 years ago. We participate in the CWA as "solidarity unionists", fighting for greater militancy, democracy and revolutionary analysis of the system we are up against. We do not ignore the CWA or let it exclusively define our activity. It is this mix of independent IWW organizing and dual-card organizing that really defines our GMB and points toward a successful model for bringing the IWW back to the cutting edge of the struggle for emancipation from capitalism and the state.

— x359209



IWW Shuts Down Starbucks at Mall of America

This morning a group of about 50 Wobblies temporarily shut-down the Starbucks at the Mall of America. The purpose of the action was to bring pressure to the manager to re-hire a worker who was fired for union organizing.

During the action, workers came in small groups and demanded to speak to the boss. When confronted about firing a worker for union organizing, the boss said "it was between the company and the worker and it was none of the union's business." The wobblies basically responded "your lying and were not going to let up until you rehire our fellow worker."

The action is a step up in the escalation of the campaign which began last week with a series of phone-ins. After about 10 minutes or so of back and forth between different groups, the shop was full of Wobblies singing multiple choruses of solidarity forever. Everyone was promptly kicked out of the mall but nobody was arrested.

It was inspiring and awesome to see some direct action on the

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Editor Ericco Hedake on the worldwide response and resistance to the recent economic crisis.

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Chicago Starbucks worker Joe Tessone confronts Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz, hilarity ensues as executive flees the scene.

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May Day Party!

Join the IWW May 1-3 in celebrating the workers' holiday! More information and an itinerary on back page.

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THE ORGANIZER

A monthly publication of the Twin Cities General Membership Branch of the Industrial Workers of the World.

The IWW is a union for all workers, dedicated to organizing on the job for better conditions today, and a world without bosses tomorrow.

You are invited to contact the Branch Secretary-Treasurer or any Delegate listed below for no-pressure conversations about your issues on the job.

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Unless otherwise stated, the opinions expressed are not necessarily the official position of the local branch or the union as a whole.

Many of our members are engaged in active organizing campaigns, and some use an alias, occasionally their union card number, or 'x' number. We prefer transparency over secrecy whenever possible, but will always honor requests for anonymity.

Editorial

Governments in Europe are starting to fall on the regular. Belgium, Iceland, Latvia, and the Czech Republic have all crumbled or been unseated as a result of the economic crisis. Expect more, perhaps even (especially in Central Europe and the Balkans) by the time this is printed. Meanwhile, China is making noise about the ability of the USA to even continue to make regular interest payments on the roughly \$1 Trillion the US owes it. China is the largest government creditor in the world - it holds approximately \$2 Trillion in foreign government debt.

Even relatively non-political workers must pause at this point and at least consider that this crisis might not end the way financial managers and politicians claim. The trillions of dollars spent by the US government on stimulus programs, bailouts and war, will fail to drag our national economy out of the toilet. Once we fall, or perhaps even before that process is complete, the global economic crisis will spiral out of control into political and military arenas.

Will your life change? How much? What are the bosses likely to do to prepare for the possibility of real global crisis, in order to hang on to their power, and what should we be doing?

Consider the possibility that the crisis we are in is the same crisis that has gripped the globe for nearly five centuries; like every previous crisis of production, accumulation, and distribution, there is a good chance that some of those already on top will be able to preserve their position. More frequently, such crises lead to a change among those on top. Those of us who want to overthrow the entire system should be paying as close attention to the economics of the current crisis as the bosses are - that is knowledge we will need in order to prevent new bosses from taking over, once

we have occupied our workplaces and continued to produce for the working class.

This issue of *The Organizer* has news and analysis from here and afar. There are updates and stories from local organizing campaigns in the food service industries, stories on our union's current search for a stable office space, and articles from Mexico and about Gaza.

We'll be playing with the format and content of *The Organizer* over the next few weeks. Let us know how we're doing: send compliments, complaints, and general hoo-ha to tc-organizer@riseup.net. We also publish letters.

— FW Errico Hedake

MOA Direct Action, continued from page 1

shop floor, to let the boss know that we permit or do not permit the flow of production. I got mad props for the workers who organized the action.

All things considered, it was a very successful action as part of an ongoing effort to organize starbucks workers in the twin cities. It will be very interesting from the perspective of labor and constitutional law if the struggle escalates into more direct and extended confrontations between workers and bosses inside the mall.

It was certainly a relief to not be detained by riot cops prior to getting of at the MOA stop. I don't have pics or anything yet but will try and post links to them as they become available.

— FW Ursa Minor

A Twin Cities IWW Office Space

For a long time now, we've been talking about finding our own space as a union--a dedicated site for the Twin Cities IWW membership. The need to have a home of our own isn't just about finding a convenient place to hold our branch meetings. It's also about taking our place within the community, validating our success as a branch, and showing ourselves that we are more than just a collection of individuals who get together at a bookstore or a coffee shop. I think I speak for every member in thanking May Day and all of our other past meeting locations for their support; but we are a union, and as a union, we need to find a sense of permanence. As a union, we need to be a destination for people who need a union. And to do that, we need to be available to workers in the community. We need to be more than a voicemail line with an email address. We need to have a physical location that provides an outreach to the workers we need to organize.

In having our own space, we would have a facility where we can hold branch meetings, do organizer trainings, have one-on-one meetings with workers, hold fundraisers...the list of what we can do is almost endless. Many members are already prepared to donate furnishings, computer equipment, and other items. But to make use of it all, we need a space; and to get a space we need every Twin Cities IWW member to help us get there by contributing funds. We have a space fund that is slowly growing, but only a handful of members are giving to that fund. Before making a financial commitment to acquire a branch office, we need to know that we have sustainable funding to allow us to keep that space. We're asking every Twin Cities IWW member to play an active role in acquiring and maintaining our own refuge from an increasingly unjust and anti-worker society. The Twin Cities IWW can be a destination for oppressed workers; and, by working with like-minded community activists, we can be a big part of creating the social and economic change that defines the IWW.

Members of the Space Committee will be contacting every Twin Cities IWW member about contributing to our own space. You may have already heard from one of us. None of us as individuals has the financial ability to make this happen, but by acting in solidarity...by acting as a union...we are strong enough to make it a reality. We have enough in our Space Fund to start out. If each member would commit to a regular contribution of five to ten dollars per month, we could get this done right now. Our union has grown in numbers, in organizing campaigns, and in community outreach. To continue our growth, we need to have our own place. That way, the next time someone asks you if the IWW still exists, you can point to the big red and black sign on the building and say, "Of course...and you're welcome to join us!"

— FW Bob Adams

The Day My Boss Ran Away

The time is 8:55 AM, 5 minutes before my alarm clock was supposed to sound I am awoken by a text message which says that Howard Schultz, Starbucks CEO and #1 union buster, is having a press conference at the Oak and Rush Starbucks location. I jump out of bed, get dressed, and haul downtown. By the time I get there, the news cameras are gone. I look around and there he is sitting behind a merchandise wall in an interview with a few reporters. I order an Iced Tall Passion Tea... no need for caffeine, I'm fired up.

My old District Manager is in the cafe greeting customers and she asks me why I'm there. "Just getting a drink," I respond. She then proceeds to make a call on her cell phone, obviously calling upper management. After I get my beverage, I find a seat, set my bag down, and I approach him.

"Mr. Schultz?," I say as I reach out to shake his hand and he stands up, "My name is Joe Tessone, I'm a member of the IWW Starbucks Workers Union, I'd love to talk with you for a few minutes before you leave today."

Taken off guard he says, "I'm in a meeting right now. We can talk when I'm done." So I sit patiently at the table next to them, sipping on a my tart beverage. About 10 minutes go by and their interview ends.

Again, I approach the man. "Mr. Schultz. I have been a Starbucks partner for over 4 and a 1/2 years. Three years ago, my co-workers and I gave the company a list of things that were of major concern to us and we have, for the past three years, been ignored

by the company. We would like you to sit down at the negotiation table with us to discuss our concerns and needs."

Immediately, he started to walk backwards away from me. "I don't have time for this. I have a phone conference to be on," he said nervously as he turned around and scampered to the back door of the the cafe. "Don't turn your back on us like this, Howard! Baristas are living in poverty!" I exclaimed. He then disappeared out the emergency exit.

Without hesitation, the Chicago Regional Director enters the scene and asks me if I'd like to sit down and talk with her. Generally, I

won't talk with management without another union member present, but this was a special occasion.

She then started spewing out baseless talking points about "Optimal Scheduling:" the newest tactic in Starbucks' war against its workers. "It will create full time positions for partners and those who are part time will fill in the gaps," she said. I asked her if that meant guaranteed hours for full time workers. "We cannot guarantee anything," she responded.

Essentially, what it comes down to is that they are going to lay off workers who do not "fit into the the new system," part timers will "fill in the gaps" and will not receive enough hours to qualify for benefits, and so-called full timers will not be guaranteed any number of hours. Basically, nothing will change except that people who cannot comply with the unreasonable expectations for availability will be fired.

Throughout the conversation I
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Reflections on Gaza

I offered to write about recent events in Gaza. Last month's edition of the Organizer carried the IWW's official statement on the situation, and I couldn't agree more with that assessment. The brutality of the Israeli invasion has to be condemned in the strongest terms. But indiscriminate killing, by either side and on whatever scale, is to be condemned. The only real answer is the solidarity of working people of all nations, and the building of democratic structures, both economic and political.

So what can I add? I've never been to Gaza, but I've taken 3 trips to Israel, and have lived there for a total of about 2 years.

On the first of my 3 trips to Israel I was just in 3rd grade. I had fun, became fluent in Hebrew (as fluent as a 3rd grader, anyway), and tried to run away from home.

On my second trip, I spent a year in college at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. I went there as a "labor Zionist", and came home as an anti-Zionist and an anarchist. By some simple twist of fate, I happened to be there in a year of large-scale domestic civil unrest. I got involved with Trotskyist and New Left groups, and I hung around with a group called the Black Panthers, Sephardic Jewish youth mostly from North Africa protesting discrimination by the Ashkenazic Jews from Europe who dominated the economic and political structures of the country. After 2 arrests and a few street battles against water canons and mounted police, I began to reconsider my political views.

It's a little tricky. There's no way to deny the extreme persecution suffered by the Jews over many centuries. I was born just 8 years after the end of WWII, and the aftershocks of the Holocaust dominated my upbringing as a Jewish child and youth. The need for a place of security, where we wouldn't be a small and vulnerable minority, were ingrained in me, and made total sense. Besides, it was the era of national liberation in much of the 3rd world. Why not national liberation for the Jews?

There's a problem with this, however. While nationalism may instinctively seem the appropriate response to national oppression, it never really works out very well in practice. At best, nationalism serves to obscure the class oppression at the heart of the system, and at worst, nationalism justifies the oppression of any minority or immigrant population within reach. The idea of structuring social relations according to national affiliation is inherently undemocratic.

This analysis seems to me to be true in basically any situation. We clearly see the problems caused by the nationalist response of many Jews to their undeniable historical oppression. To be consistent, we would have to see that a nationalist response by the Palestinians to their undeniable oppression is also problematic. Indiscriminate shelling of Israeli towns and hatred of the Jews cannot be seen as an acceptable response.



Israel's culpability as the main force creating this situation is clear. The nature of the settlement of Jews in Palestine and the ongoing settlements on Palestinian lands, collective punishment of families, economic exploitation and other conditions of the occupation put most of the blame for the current situation squarely on the Israeli side. But in evaluating what is to be done, I think we have to be consistent in our positions regarding national borders and working class solidarity.

My 3rd trip to Israel was in May, 2007. I went for 2 weeks to visit my older sister, who has lived there for 50 years. My sister has been heavily involved in a certain sector of the Israeli peace movement, having initiated a process of dialogue between groups of Israelis and Palestinians. These dialogue groups mostly ended with the second Intifadah.

I want to mention my conversations with a Palestinian man

whom I met on that trip. His name is Hamdi, and he's from a town in the West Bank. He's a merchant, he has a stall in the shuk in the old city of Jerusalem. As happens occasionally in the shuk, he invited me to the back room for tea.

He was a very pleasant, engaging man, and we had what I thought was a fairly frank discussion about the situation in Israel/Palestine. He

said he wasn't against the Jews, he was just against the occupation, and that most other Palestinians he knew felt the same. There can be no peace until the occupation ends. He said the occupation will end – look at the French in Algeria, the English in India, the Dutch in Indonesia... It's inevitable, it's just a matter of how and when.

He made a comment that I have heard other Arabs make as well. He said that Jews and Arabs are cousins, and so we should learn to get along. He meant cousins in the literal sense. In the Old Testament, it says that the Arabs are descended from Abraham's son Ishmael, and the Jews are descended from his other son, Isaac. We are cousins, both peoples descended from Abraham.

After awhile, I bought a few things. I bought a Qaffiyeh, then looked at some coins, some going back to ancient Rome, some as recent as the British Mandate (the period of British rule over Palestine, from the end of WWI to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948).

I was mostly interested in the ancient coins. I thought they would be a great present to bring home to my son, who was then 11 years old. But, for reasons I didn't immediately understand, Hamdi seemed to want me to buy the less expensive British Mandate coin. I went ahead and bought the Roman coins. Hamdi pressed me

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to buy the Mandate coin as well, but by that point I had truthfully already given him all the money I had with me, down to the last shekel. He handed me the Mandate coin and said, "you can take this coin for free, as long as you promise to use it to tell your son what happened to us under the British Mandate, how our land was taken from us. It's important to teach our children the truth. That's how things will change."

Okay, I don't remember if those were his exact words, but it was pretty much like that. And, when I got home, I did as I promised.

So, in the end, what about Gaza? I guess I agree with Hamdi. Though I don't take it from the Old Testament, I basically think that we're all cousins, and we shouldn't be killing each other. That's true whether it's Israel's massive destruction in Gaza, or the shelling of southern Israel by Hamas. The difference, it seems to me, is a matter of capacity, not intent.

Still, as Hamdi said, the underlying problem is the continuing occupation, which puts most of the responsibility for the situation squarely on Israel (and, as he pointed out, on the United States). The occupation, with all its inherent and imposed brutality, must end.

I also, again, agree with the statement by the IWW. Ending the occupation isn't enough. Underlying the nationalist struggle is an economic struggle. Working people have a common interest and a common struggle across the arbitrary national boundaries that have been established by ruling elites. Nationalist hatreds serve to obscure that common interest and suppress that common struggle.

Rather than the two-state solution advocated by most of those working for a solution, or even the one democratic state advocated by some who see that separate is not necessarily equal, we might advocate for a no-state solution.

I have to say that, right now, I can't imagine the workers of Gaza and the workers of Israel joining together to fight for their common class interests. Most days I can barely imagine the workers in my office joining together to fight for their common class interests. I don't know how we get there. But I think that, somehow, that's where we have to end up.

Right now, I think I'll go in the back room and have some tea.

— FW Joel Schwartz

"The Starbucks Problem"

Last month, anonymous sources posted a secret conference call hosted by Bank of America on the website Wikileaks.org. The leaked audio file provides the public with a rare window into the paranoid and anxiety-ridden conscience of the corporate elite. On the call, Home Depot founder Bernie Marcus, corporate executives, right-wing activists, and notorious anti-union lobbyist Rick Berman rail against the possibility of a revitalized labor movement, with Marcus referring to unionization of retail as the "demise of a civilization." One participant coins the term the "Starbucks Problem," referring to the possibility that workers will simply form their own unions, rather than waiting for the lethargic union establishment to initiate organizing drives.

The conference call was prompted by the potential passage of the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). If it passes, EFCA will change US labor law to require employers to bargain with a union if 50%+1 of the workforce in any workplace sign union authorization cards. This would replace the current process, which creates delays of several weeks between the signing of authorization cards and an NLRB-supervised election, leaving the bosses plenty of time to fire or intimidate union supporters.

Many trade unionists pin their hopes for a revitalized labor movement on the passage of EFCA. They hope that card-check provisions, combined with stiffer penalties for union-busting will allow them to sign up millions of new members in the service industry. Of course, requiring employers to bargain does nothing to ensure the internal democracy or power of the new union. The Industrial Worker, newspaper of the

Industrial Workers of the World, recently published a particularly lucid expression of this critique.

If Corporate America is anxious about the growth of the Change to Win or the AFL-CIO unions, it was clear from this conference call that "The Starbucks Problem" leaves them absolutely terrified. In a tone verging on hysteria, one executive on the call worried that proactive groups of workers will simply start their own unions, as we have done at Starbucks with the help of the Industrial Workers of the World.

Of course, the IWW has been organizing at Starbucks since long before EFCA was a glimmer in the AFL-CIO's eye. We know that workers don't need professional staff, expensive lawyers, or government recognition to organize an independent voice on the job. What the corporate elites call "The Starbucks Problem", we call "Solidarity Unionism." And whether EFCA passes or not, we will continue building solidarity with our coworkers, making demands, and winning gains for workers at even the largest corporate chains.

With or without the Employee Free Choice Act, the "Starbucks Problem" is going to get a lot bigger than Starbucks.

— FW Erik Forman



Take Back the Night!

Several Twin Cities Wobblies stood up to queer-bashing despite frigid temperatures in a late night march in Uptown, Minneapolis, Thursday January 29th. The march was called in response to the queer-bashing of a woman in that neighborhood the week before. Kristen Boyne was ambushed by two individuals, called a “f-ing dyke” and then beaten unconscious.

The following is from the call by the march organizers: “Love, compassion and understanding is the only cure for hatred and fear. So in response to this senseless act of hate and violence, we will march to demonstrate that queer women (and all women!) will not tolerate being victimized by hateful bigotry and violence. Let us gather the collective energy of our community to promote awareness and understanding with a loving and peaceful demonstration.”

The march was extremely well attended despite the sub-zero weather and the late time on a weeknight. Protest organizers from GLBT organizations spoke and then we went on a very short march on the sidewalks. Police presence was minimal but the protest marshals would not let anyone march in the street or cross on red lights.

While we don’t know Kristen Boyne and this attack did not occur at her workplace, the IWW is always ready to fight all oppression, whether on the shop-floor, in our communities, and in the streets. Any form of oppression that affects working class people – which queer-bashing certainly does – is a union issue. This is what makes the IWW different from business unions that only fight for some workers some of the time. The IWW motto has always been “An injury to one is an injury to all.” This is the meaning of solidarity and that’s what the union is all about.

The night was freezing but solidarity always warms the heart!

– FW Kirsten Kohlhasse



Getting By with the Ambulantes of the Metro

“Damas y caballeros, traigo la venta!” If you spend even a few minutes riding the subway here, you are guaranteed to here this call in your car. It means “Ladies and gentleman, here’s the sale!” and is called out for hours each day by people called ambulantes, who wander the subway selling their wares. They sell small things, from tissues to cheap make-up to pirated compilation CDs. Those who sell CDs bring backpacks outfitted with speakers to blast samples of their product, which they sell for the equivalent of about two to three dollars. Those who sell the cheaper goods like

to wash away the bad press the city receives for its crime rate without having to deal with the fundamental causes of crime. This does not affect the ambulantes who work the metros, however, who sell without the benefit of shops. Although Mayor Ebrard is from the leftist Party for the Democratic Revolution, he continues to place the interests of big business above the interests of poor workers.

Anywhere workers are exploited, they are more than passive victims caught in a capitalist game. While ambulantes call out their



rice bars and gum make about thirty cents per sale and are clearly the most impoverished, usually older women whose voices crack when they try to shout, or younger ones with a child or two often strapped to their bodies.

If things were not difficult enough for these workers, Mexico City’s mayor has begun a campaign to remove the ambulantes from the historic city center, most frequented by tourists and providing the highest earning potential for ambulantes who sell from mini-shops around the Zócalo. Mayor Ebrard claims this is to beautify the city; perhaps he is attempting

products in monotone voices, when they run into their fellow workers they drop the “sales grimace.” Running to the next train at metro stops, they pause to smile and say hello. A few days ago I watched a woman cheerfully wait for a little girl to get change from her parents at a stop, even though it meant that the worker could not transfer to the next train and would waste a few more minutes of her life unable to make more sales, precious minutes for a young mother in this line of work. Ambulantes who end up in the same train car (something they attempt to avoid) often stop to chat, or warn each other of

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kept asking her to meet with the union as a group, since they have continually responded with the exact same talking point, "I am willing to meet with anybody as an individual." She, of course, kept to the script.

After hearing her say that at least a dozen times, I told her to stop avoiding my question. "Are you willing to meet with us as a collective organization of baristas? It's a yes or no question." She responded again with the same talking point, but tagged on "I'm not avoiding your question" to the the front of it.

The conversation continued along the same lines for a few more minutes and I asked in a different way, "You are telling me that you are unwilling then to meet with us as a group. Am I correct in saying that?" She paused a second, looked away, and said "If that is the way you want to look at it..." I then thanked her for her time, picked up my bag, and walked away.

Diplomacy requires a willingness to negotiate. It is unfortunate for everyone that they are so stubborn. The company is spending hundreds of dollars per hour trying to fight us with lawyers while baristas are next to homelessness. We won't back down. The struggle continues. Howie, you can run, but you can't hide.

UPDATE

Shortly after his exchange with Schultz, Tessone was ordered into a one-on-one meeting with a Starbucks Regional Director, who warned Tessone that he was out of compliance with Starbucks' new "Optimal Scheduling" policy which demands constant availability to work without guaranteeing hours.

"Starbucks' claim that I was out of compliance with the policy is a fantasy; I actually exceeded its requirements," explained Tessone. "I come to work on time and work hard everyday. It's clear that my attempt to speak with Starbucks' anti-union CEO and the escalation of union activity at the company is what caused my termination."

In addition to Tessone's firing, the Industrial Workers of the World is currently challenging several unlawful responses by Starbucks to the increase in action by the union in Chicago. These charges include allegations that Starbucks increased surveillance against baristas at a Chicago store to which the union recently expanded and illegally laid off barista Tracey Dietrich. The IWW Starbucks Workers Union has thus far defeated the coffee giant in six labor cases across three cities.

"We will continue to ensure our members are protected," says Chrissy Cogswell, a Starbucks barista in Chicago and a union organizer. "Every time the company violates workers' rights, we will seek justice."

— FW Joe Tessone

Valentine's Day Occupation

On Valentine's Day 2009 community organizers moved a homeless family into one of the hundreds of vacant HUD homes in Minneapolis. The family was delighted and empowered by the collective effort and direct action of their fellow community members.

While this event was public, it is part of a broader underground railroad involving over a dozen occupations throughout the twin cities. With hundreds of vacant homes that the citizens pay to keep heated during the winter, there is no reason that a single homeless person should freeze to death in our cities.

The vacant homes are particularly insulting in the context of the current crisis of capitalism which forces the least capable to suffer the heaviest burden.

The event was organized by the People's Economic Human Rights Campaign and participants included individual members of the community and the Twin Cities Industrial Workers of the World.

This video (<http://tiny.cc/yo5nh>) was taken right after the house was occupied.

We are done seeing our neighbors get kicked out their homes. We're taking them back.

— FW Ursa Minor

Ambulantes, continued from page 6

unfriendly Metro officials waiting outside the cars. These workers, part of Mexico's enormous informal economy, are overwhelmingly positive and friendly despite the difficult circumstances they face. They are poor, but they are alive.

Attempts to organize ambulantes to face their collective problems have thus far met with failure. Part of this is due to Mexico's tradition of corporatism, which co-opts the workers into workers' and citizens' associations run by political parties. Some ambulante groups in the past affiliated with the Institutional Revolutionary Party, the political party that ruled Mexico for 70 years until the end of the twentieth century. This control by the ruling party meant that the concerns of the ambulantes were not taken seriously and no effective opposition attempted. Other groups have more successfully resisted harmful policies, like the Popular Union of Ambulante Vendors in the nearby city of Puebla in the 1980s and 90s, but this too ended poorly when the group capitulated to the city government's demands and ambulantes were pushed out of areas in the name of revitalization.

While the global economic crisis continues to spiral downward, narcotrafficking's alternate illegal economy rises, and the police force becomes even more repressive, the situation of the vendors who wander the underground of this city seems unlikely to improve soon. But like those around the world who struggle in tough times, the ambulantes refuse to give up, even in the face of overwhelming pressure. Hopefully someday soon they will build an organization that can stand up to City Hall. In the meantime they do what they must to get by, and accept pity from no one.

—FW John O'Reilly
Letter from Mexico City
March 12, 2009

**The Crew
by Terricide, local band.
Playing at IWW May Day party.**

flying hard, tossing cards
a union crew, fixed course, lunar orbits
precious fuels for private moons
and payday waits, last stop, cash the
contract
emergency frequency
a message from back home, from the
black pope
war is near, you're needed here
fly home, fly fast, last bout, blast the
bastards out

barker sets the headset down
lights a smoke and eyes the boys
sizes up his choice
stands, tries to find his voice

i'm happy just to have my job
i'm grateful for the food it brings
for my family
for our fierce fraternity

but i'm sick of spending years in space

i can't recall my daughter's face
or how passion tastes
i'm running short on years to waste
back home revolt is in the air
we owe it to ourselves to fight
and end this mechanical capitalist night

the captain's a corporate with gods for
guards
titanium triceps and cleaver claws
how can we contest them and wrest
control

our limbs are our own
and we're weak when alone
but we'll take what we want
for the union makes us strong

guards at the door
who are you looking for
get in uniform

the crew responds flippantly
skip the scrutiny
this is a mutiny

the tension snaps rapidly

guards attack rabidly
caught in a cavity
the union acts organized
hacks at their arteries
don't let them cauterize

bodies lie tumidly
tongues loll stupidly
smouldering circuitry

the crew walks past them
marching in tandem
captain's cabin

wielding god bones, set a course for
home
the guard's drumstick drips on the cap-
tain's toes
he cowers and covers his face in shame
the captain, the boss, but only in name
the crew taps a keg, celebrates in song

a light year or more
to rebellion, to war
but we'll take what we want
for the union makes us strong

Itinerary for May Day Festivities!



Friday May 1st

Anti-Capitalist Bloc in the Annual Immigrant
and Worker's Rights March

4pm Lake St. and Bloomington Ave. S. Min-
neapolis look for the red and black flags

5pm-8pm Street Festival at Nicollet Ave. &
28th St. Minneapolis

Saturday May 2nd

May Day Party!

15 Bands, Food, and Drinks

All ages \$5-10 suggested donation

Benefit for the Industrial Workers of the
World (IWW) and Sisters Camelot

The Brand New Sisters Camelot Show Space
2657 32nd Ave. S. (right on the Greenway in
Seward)

5:00pm doors

Sunday May 3rd

35th Annual May Day Parade and Festival
Look for the Black Sabo Cat float!

Junkyard Empire
Truck Stops Across America
Terricide
Ogre Smash Death Boom
Holy!Holy!Holy! (MO)
ShugE
Building Better Bombs
Bla Bla Blacksheep
Nancy Drew Crew
Brian Whitson and the Night Wolves
Black Sails
Shannon Murray
Bouncer Fighter
Clawthroat
Sundowners

Upcoming Events.

Delegate/Organizer Meeting

April 19 at 12:00 PM

Monthly meeting to discuss
organizing strategy and
branch direction. Central
Minneapolis Library.

General Membership Branch Meeting

May 5 at 7:00 PM

Monthly business meeting for
the IWW Twin Cities General
membership Branch. Come
vote on where your dues are
spent! All members have a
vote. Mayday Books, 301
Cedar Ave

Delegate/Organizer Meeting

May 17 at 12:00 PM

Monthly meeting to discuss
organizing strategy and
branch direction. Central